

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1, 2013 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Skoll.

3. ROLL CALL/ MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE

Present: Commissioners D'anjou, Gibson, Polcari, Rizzo, Skoll, Watson and Chairperson Weideman.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Associate Martinez, Planning Associate Joe, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, and Assistant City Attorney Sullivan.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Planning Manager Lodan reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on Friday, April 26, 2013.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None.

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENTS

Planning Manager Lodan relayed the applicant's request to continue Agenda Item 10A, CUP13-00007: Angel Bins (Simon Property Group), indefinitely.

MOTION: Commissioner Rizzo moved to continue Agenda Item 10A indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by unanimous vote.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 – None.

Chairperson Weideman reviewed the policies and procedures of the Planning Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to the City Council.

8. TIME EXTENSIONS – None.

9. SIGN HEARINGS – None.

10. CONTINUED HEARINGS

10A. CUP13-00007: ANGEL BINS (SIMON PROPERTY GROUP)

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the installation and operation of donation bins on properties located in the H-DA1 Zone at 3520 and 3525 Carson Street, 21741 Del Amo Circle East and 3635 Fashion Way.

Item was continued indefinitely.

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Item 12A was considered out of order at this time.

12A. PCR13-00001: BENJAMIN ARCHER

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Planning Commission Review to allow a two-unit project to exceed a 0.50 Floor Area Ratio on property located within the Small Lot, Low-Medium Overlay District in the R-2 Zone at 2031 Andreo Avenue.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Manager Lodan reported that this item was considered at the April 17, 2013 meeting, but there was a noticing error so the action taken at that time has been vacated, making it necessary to hear the case again.

In response to Chairperson Weideman's inquiry, Assistant City Attorney Sullivan clarified that any testimony from the April 17 meeting should be disregarded as if it never happened.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request.

Chairperson Weideman disclosed that he had walked the neighborhood and the alley to the rear of the property.

Benjamin Archer, 2031 Andreo Avenue, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He explained that he would like to add a second unit in the back over a new two-car garage since the property is zoned R-2. He noted that the structure will match the Craftsman architecture of the existing house, which was built in 1912.

In response to Chairperson Weideman's inquiry, Melanie Archer, 2031 Andreo Avenue, applicant, reported that the existing house will not be remodeled, but it will be repainted to match the new addition and the front yard will be re-landscaped.

Helen Everett, 2101 Andreo Avenue, expressed concerns that the addition will add to parking problems in this neighborhood. She questioned whether the applicants will be required to provide a bin for construction materials during the tear-down process.

Planning Manager Lodan stated that typically there would be a bin for construction debris because it cannot be discarded as normal trash.

Ms. Archer noted the new garage will actually remove some cars from the street because she cannot park in the existing garage.

Voicing support for the project, Chairperson Weideman stated he appreciated that the applicants were preserving the historically significant front house.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to approve PCR13-00001, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-015.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

11. WAIVERS

11A. WAV13-00004: NICHOLAS NED LEONE

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Waiver to allow an as-built, over-height block wall on property located in the R-1 Zone at 22603 Hickory Avenue.

Recommendation: Approval.

Planning Associate Martinez introduced the request and noted supplemental material consisting of correspondence received after the agenda item was completed.

Commissioner D'anjou disclosed that she had viewed the wall.

Chairperson Weideman disclosed that he also viewed the wall and walked the neighborhood.

Nicholas Leone, 22603 Hickory Avenue, applicant, reported that he increased the height of the wall to block noise from the street and for privacy and safety reasons. He explained that before raising the height of the wall, it was very easy to climb over and people could easily see into his house since his property is at a higher elevation than the sidewalk. He noted that he also experiences a lot of noise when employees of the adjacent Kings Hawaiian restaurant/bakery arrive very early in the morning. He stated that the block wall will be covered with stucco and painted to match the house when he completes improvements to the property which should be within the next year.

In response to Chairperson Weideman's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan provided clarification regarding height limits for fences/walls. He advised that if the Waiver is approved, the applicant will have to demonstrate that the wall is structurally sound, which may require the removal of soil to expose the footings.

Chairperson Weideman asked about penalties for as-built walls, and Planning Manager Lodan advised that permit fees are increased.

Mr. Leone expressed confidence that the wall was structurally sound and would meet Code requirements.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Mr. Leone explained that he was not aware that a permit was required for the wall because there are several similar walls in the neighborhood. He reported that the original wall was constructed in the 1960s; that he hired someone to add on to the wall and was assured that it was built properly; and that the extension was completed within the last year. He voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Chairperson Weideman voiced his opinion that the wall makes the property look like a prison camp.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Skoll moved to approve WAV13-00004, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Polcari and passed by a 6-1 roll call vote, with Chairperson Weideman dissenting.

Planning Associate Martinez read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-017.

MOTION: Commissioner Polcari moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 13-017. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Skoll and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The Commission recessed from 7:30 to 7:35 p.m.

13. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

14. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS**

14A. **REVIEW OF DRAFT 2014-2021 HOUSING ELEMENT**

Planning Commission Community Workshop to review the Draft 2014-2021 Housing Element.

Planning Associate Kevin Joe provided background information about the Housing Element, noting that it is required to be updated periodically to comply with State housing law and to respond to changes in population and housing demand. He reported that the Draft Housing Element has been available for public review since April 22, 2013 at public counters in the Community Development Department and the City Clerk's office, in all Torrance public libraries and on the Community Development website and notification of this hearing was sent to various housing advocacy organizations, developers and homeowners associations.

Laura Stetson, MIG Hogle-Ireland, consultant, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Draft 2014-2021 Housing Element. She provided an overview of Housing Element content, discussed the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), and reviewed the policies and programs designed to help meet the objectives listed in the Housing Element. She outlined the procedure for formal adoption of the Housing Element.

Referring to the sites identified as potential locations for new housing units per the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, Commissioner Skoll questioned whether these sites have to comply with the "Safe Route to School Act."

Ms. Stetson stated that she would have to research this issue, but doubted that it would be applicable.

Chairperson Weideman invited public comment.

Charles Deemer, Torrance, expressed an interest in knowing the Regional Housing Needs Assessment for Inglewood and Rancho Palos Verdes to compare Torrance's allocation for low income housing. He requested clarification regarding the density bonus for low-income housing. He called for more stringent parking requirements for residential developments. He expressed concerns about the ramifications should the City fail to meet its Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

Chairperson Weideman clarified that the City only has to provide opportunities for additional housing units, but is under no obligation to construct them and there is no penalty for not reaching RHNA goals.

Mr. Deemer suggested that manufactured housing could be a means to provide opportunities for home ownership for lower income residents.

In response to Mr. Deemer's inquiry, Ms. Stetson provided clarification regarding the meaning of various terms in the Housing Element and the adoption process.

Chairperson Weideman stated that he read the Housing Element cover to cover and found it to be very comprehensive and very well done.

Commissioner Rizzo echoed Chairperson Weideman's comments and suggested that it would be helpful for purposes of readability, if a listing of all the acronyms and what they mean was included.

Commissioner Skoll reported that he also read the Housing Element from cover to cover and found it to be very comprehensive with a wealth of information. He suggested that a chart be included with a brief description of each zoning district.

Responding to Mr. Deemer's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan reported that the RHNA for Inglewood is 1013 units, Rancho Palos Verdes is 31 units, and Palos Verdes Estates is 16 units.

Ms. Stetson advised that the formula for determining each city's RHNA is complex, however, each city is obligated to provide housing for all income levels. She explained that the percentage for each income category would be similar to the percentages for Torrance (Very Low = 26.2%, Low = 15.7%, Moderate = 16.8%, Above Moderate = 41.4%).

Commissioner Watson commented that she found the Housing Element to be very interesting and thought it presented a clear picture of Torrance as it currently exists and offers insights into how well it functions.

Ms. Stetson reported that the Housing Element will be brought back to the Commission upon completion of the 60-day review period.

Chairperson Weideman thanked Ms. Stetson and Planning Associate Joe for their presentations.

15. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

15A. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR WEEKLY SUMMARY REPORTS

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the Community Development Director Weekly Summary Reports for March 29 and April 4, 2013 were provided to the Commission.

16. REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS – None.

17. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the May 15, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

18. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

18A. Commissioners commented positively on the Housing Element and thanked Ms. Stetson and Planning Associate Joe for their presentations.

18B. Chairperson Weideman welcomed Commission Watson back after her vacation.

18C. Planning Manager Lodan reported that a dinner for former Commissioner Ray Uchima has been scheduled for Thursday, June 14.

19. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:34 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, May 15, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

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Approved as submitted June 19, 2013 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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